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Testimony of State Representative Patricia Billie Miller
Public Health Committee
February 27, 2013

Good Morning Co-Chairs Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, ranking members Senator Welch, Representative Srinivasan and members of the public health committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of H.B. 6000 An Act Concerning Complaints about Patient Care in Hospitals.

It is a fundamental aspect of government to assist and provide for the protection of its citizens. Title 19A, Chapter 368v, subsection 19a-550 helps facilitates such protections in health care through the creation of a Patient's Bills of Rights. The Patient's Bill of Rights provides many protections to those that require long term medical treatment, focusing on the patient's right to knowledge, particularly the right to understand their rights as patients, and to be fully informed about their medical condition, their doctors capabilities, prescribed procedures, and services and fees provided.

Additionally, the Patient's Bill of rights provides that a patient, "may voice grievances and recommend changes in policies and services to facility staff...free from restraint...and shall have prompt efforts made by the facility to resolve grievances the patients may have" (§ 19a-550. Patients' bill of rights, CT ST § 19a-550).

However, what this Bill of Rights does not require is the easy access to Hospital Staff to make a complaint. This reduces a patient's ability to lodge complaints and to have their issues resolved promptly, which is required under the Patient's Bill of Rights. Hospitals are large facilities, and without proper guidance and instruction it can be extremely difficult to contact an appropriate individual to file complaints. In fact, the layered nature of a Hospital's structure could create a barrier to patient's complaints altogether. The proposed bill would help relieve this problem by 1) mandating that a hospital employee be available at all times to receive complaints and 2) requiring that the information to contact such an employee would be prominently displayed and available to patients.

Thank you again for allowing me to submit this testimony.